

Georgia Outdoors

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photo by Dean Wohlgenuth
Lake Lanier receives a netful of trout from Douglas Hedden, a hatchery employee of the Game and Fish Commission.

Lakes Lanier and Clark Hill Get Rainbow Trout Stocking

Rainbow trout stocking in Lake Lanier a year ago has enjoyed such success that the lake has again received a large stocking, and another lake, Clark Hill, has been given an initial experimental stocking of trout.

Lanier will now be stocked annually in an effort to make it one of the best trout lakes in the southeast, the State Game and Fish Commission said.

Leon Kirkland, coordinator of fisheries for the commission, said some 40,000 trout were put into Lanier at various times and places during the past winter.

The initial stocking in Lanier a year ago of 11,000 trout has produced many good sized fish, averaging two to three pounds. This growth rate was described by Kirkland as the "highest recorded" on such water. Trout of well over three pounds have been caught in the lake during last winter.

From now on, Kirkland said, Lanier will be stocked as a permanent program. "Things are going fine with these trout," he said. "We'll continue stocking Lanier each year, but from now on, we'll put more trout in. How many we'll put in depends mainly on the availability of fish and continued good growth rate. If we stock too many, the trout will become crowded and that would slow the growth rate. We must determine a point where high concentration will be achieved, yet the good growth rate will be maintained."

Experimental stockings of trout were made in Clark Hill to determine the rate of survival and growth the lake will produce.

Commission biologists said that cold water pouring into the Savannah River arm of Clark Hill from the bottom of Lake Hartwell has made that area suitable for trout. The cool water builds in that arm of the lake and extends as far as the Soap Creek vicinity.

It is unlikely that trout could survive in any other part of the lake.

"There is now potential trout water in this arm, created by construction of Hartwell Dam," said Kirkland.

"Before Hartwell Dam was built, the water was too warm. But water from Hartwell comes from the bottom of the lake and is cold enough to support trout.

"We will continue surveys to determine the amount of suitable water area in the lake," said Kirkland.

He pointed out that cool water alone was not enough. "As water comes out of Hartwell Dam, although it is cool enough, it is devoid of oxygen. But as it comes down the river and tumbles over rocks it becomes saturated with oxygen."

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New Launching Ramps Planned By Commission

While there is plenty of excellent water within just a few minutes drive of nearly any place in Georgia, no matter where you live, fishermen in some parts of the state are hampered by a frustrating problem.

The problem? Where can I put my boat into the water?

There is a great need, even critical in some areas, for more and better boat launching facilities. Needs are on some large reservoirs, and on many large rivers.

This is not being ignored by the State Game and Fish Commission, said Howard Zeller, assistant director. It is being recognized, and something is going to be done about it.

"We recognize that many impoundments are in need of launching facilities," Zeller said. As an example, he pointed out the impoundments along the Chattahoochee River, bordering Georgia and Alabama. "These waters are badly in need, as well as many fine streams in southeast Georgia and in other areas of the state."

"As quickly as we possibly can, we want to get underway a program to provide better facilities," Zeller said.

In order to have adequate facilities, he said, "we feel one ramp is needed for every 1,000 acres of water in an impoundment, and one ramp for every 15 miles of stream." This does not now hold true in many cases, he added.

"We now need to build 235 ramps on streams in the state, and 36 more on lakes," said Zeller.

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photo by Dan Keever
This is one of the few existing hard surface ramps and it is receiving heavy traffic. The Game & Fish Commission has plans to ease the load on ramps such as this one.



photo by Dan Keever

Patience pays for this careful hunter as an eight-point buck walks near his stand. Deer season has been set a week later this year.

New Hunting Regulations Show Later Deer Season

New hunting regulations for the 1966 fall season have been announced by the Georgia Game and Fish Commission.

Basically, there are no major changes in the regulations from last year. Most notable of the changes was the setting of deer season a week later than before.

Deer season in coastal counties will be October 29 through January 5, in northern and middle Georgia counties November 5 through November 28, and in all other counties that are open, from November 5 through January 5.

Hubert Handy, coordinator of game management for the Commission, said the season was put a week later in an effort to coincide with the breeding or rutting period.

"Deer are more active during their breeding season, and it's easier to hunt bucks at that time," he explained.

Archery season, he said, will be a week longer this year, with that season set for October 1 through October 29. He pointed out that archery hunters may not carry a firearm of any kind during archery-only hunts.

Muzzle Loaders

Archers may hunt during gun seasons as well. Also, muzzle loaders may be used during regular gun hunts, but Handy pointed out that a change in regulations this year requires that all muzzle loaders used for deer hunting must be of .40 caliber or larger.

"We feel that a muzzle loader of smaller caliber just doesn't have the power to do a good enough job of killing deer," he explained.

Four new counties have been added to the list of those open this year for deer hunting. They are Rockdale, Walton, Wilkinson and Schley counties. This brings the total number of counties in the state open to deer hunting to 83.

Also, all of Lincoln County will be open to hunting this year. Half of the county was open last year.

One county, Lanier, was closed to deer hunting this year. There were not enough deer in the county to support

hunting with dogs during a long season. The Commission hopes that closing the county will help expand the deer herd.

Deer Dogging

A change in hunting methods has been made for Chattahoochee and Muscogee deer hunters. This year, deer hunting with dogs will not be allowed. The change was made for two reasons: terrain in these counties is not suitable for dog hunting because of a lack of suitable escape cover, and major landowners in the counties requested the change. Deer dogging results in an excessive deer harvest in areas where thick river bottoms or swamps are not available for deer to elude dogs.

One more county has been added to the list of those which will have an either sex hunt on the final day of the season, Handy said. The additional county is McDuffie, which will be open for either sex hunting November 28, along with Jones, Jasper, Monroe and Putnam counties.

Small game seasons will be virtually the same as last year, he said, except that exact dates have been changed so that open days will not fall on Sundays, when hunting with firearms is illegal, according to state law.

"The only change in small game regulations," Handy said, "is that this year there will be a limit of one raccoon per night above the fall line. This was done at the request of the Coon Hunters Association."

Squirrel

Squirrel season will be October 15 to February 28 statewide this year. The limit will be 10 daily. Coon season is October 29 through February 28. O'possum season is October 29 through February 28, except in Coweta County, where the season is October 1 through January 21.

Quail season will be November 19 through February 28, rabbits November 19 through February 28 and grouse, October 15 through February 28.

Spring turkey seasons were announced earlier. Seasons for hunts on all game management areas, especially deer, will be announced later.

Turkey

Fall turkey hunting in the Columbus area will be November 5 through January 5. In southwest Georgia, the season will be November 19 through February 28. And in southeast Georgia, the season will be December 1 through January 5.

The trapping season is longer this year, with the season set from November 19 through February 28 for fox, o'possum, muskrat, otter, mink, raccoon and skunk.

BOAT RAMPS Continued from Page 1

He pointed out that state law forbids the Game and Fish Commission from building a ramp on any land other than that owned by the state. It is hoped, he said, that city and county governments as well as individuals will be stimulated into making land available to the state so that ramps can be built. Funds will also be made available to counties through the Federal Land and Water Conservation Act to partially defray the cost of land bought for this purpose.

"Those areas where land is made available will probably be the first to get ramps," he said. "This program of building ramps will mean a lot to people in areas where the need is great. We must find available land before we can do anything."

Zeller said plans are now underway to start the program. "We will get started July 1, when funds will be made available from the new increase in the price of hunting and fishing license fees, just passed by the Georgia legislature."

"How soon we can get started actually moving dirt and pouring concrete we don't know. But we do hope to get construction underway as quickly as possible," Zeller said.

Pheasant Stocking Program Completed

The final part of a three-phase experimental pheasant stocking program has just been completed near Calhoun, the State Game and Fish Commission reports.

The Commission released 500 pheasants this spring, at Cumberland Academy Farm near Calhoun. Previously, 240 pheasants were stocked in the fall of 1963, another 250 were added in the fall of 1964, and 135 were stocked in the spring of 1965.

The pheasants, a cross between the Chinese ringneck and the Iranian blackneck, were all stocked into the same area. Commission biologists said there is evidence the pheasants are reproducing, but it will probably be at least six or eight years until it will be known if the birds will ever reach a huntable population.

Earlier experiments showed that habitat in that area was not suitable for ringneck pheasants, but it is believed the cross between the ringneck and blackneck is better suited to the habitat in northwest Georgia.

The pheasants were acquired from the Virginia State Game Farm at Cumberland, Virginia, and brought to Georgia by truck.



photo by Dan Keever

This pheasant release was made in the morning in near-total darkness. The photographer tripped his shutter when he heard the sound of the birds flying. Willis Foster, biological aide, is preparing to open another crate.

LANIER AND CLARK HILL TROUT STOCKING, Continued from Page 1

"Clark Hill is an old enough lake that there is enough decay of organic matter on the bottom of the lake that it, too, provides oxygen," he said.



photo by Dan Keever

Jeff Houck, hatchery employee, shows one of the trout stocked in Clark Hill reservoir.

"Last year was the first time we recorded suitable temperature and oxygen conditions," Kirkland said. "Our records of temperature, oxygen and carbon dioxides according to our surveys, show that Clark Hill should be very good trout water. We'll continue our surveys through the summer to make sure that this situation is continuing."

He added that continuation of the stocking program at Clark Hill will depend on growth rate and survival. Amount of fish to be stocked into the lake in the future depends on these factors and on the availability of trout.

He said 7,000 trout averaging eight inches each were put into the lake. "I think Clark Hill will be just as good for trout as Lanier," Kirkland said. The critical time, he said, is in September and October. However, Clark Hill should have as much potential as Lanier. "The lake is fertile and has a good quantity of threadfin shad," Kirkland said.

He emphasized that stocking of trout in Lanier and Clark Hill would in no way affect populations of warmwater fish, such as bass. "Trout stay at a deeper level than warmwater fish," he pointed out, so that the fish would not normally occupy the same water. "The trout depends mainly on threadfin shad for food, and Lanier and Clark Hill have an abundance of these forage fish. There are plenty of shad for both the warmwater fish and trout. If the

trout were not there to take their share of shad, they would simply not be used. We have a good surplus of shad in Lanier and Clark Hill."

Normally, he said, trout will be located in the thermocline. In June, early in the summer season, trout should find the thermocline to be about 25 feet deep. Gradually, as the weather becomes hotter, the thermocline goes deeper, reaching a depth of perhaps 40 feet in August. The trout will be found somewhere around those depths. The thermocline is the division of the warm water layer and the cold lower layer of lake water in summer.

"After a lake stratifies in warm weather, trout will stay in the lower end of Lanier, from Flowery Branch to the dam, because that's the only place where the water is the right temperature and there is a good enough oxygen concentration for the trout. Actually, the trout will be limited to a small section of the lake," said Kirkland.

Violations

He said the only difficulty encountered so far in stocking trout in Lanier is that there have been several violations in the winter months, from November through the first of March. The trout made runs into the tributaries at that time and while there, a number of violations were discovered of gigging and seining trout. Fishing by legal methods is presently allowed in these tributaries during the winter.

Commission Warns May is Drowning Month

Even though the water sports season is just beginning, five Georgians have already lost their lives this year in drowning incidents, the State Game and Fish Commission reports.

The Commission warns that May is usually the month in which most drownings occur, since that is the time when most persons actually take part in water sports activities. Last May, seven persons drowned in one incident when an overloaded boat capsized. There were not enough life preservers aboard for the number of persons on the boat.

Many people open the new water sports season in May, and each year many more persons take up water sports for the first time. The novices, and persons who have not participated in such activities since the previous year, tend to be less conscious of water safety, and are more inclined to mishaps, the Commission says.

June, July and August are also months in which many water tragedies occur, since this is the primary season for water sports.

While boating accounts for many drownings, the water sport which is usually connected with the most fatalities is swimming. In 1965 for example, 28 persons drowned while swimming, nearly twice as many from any other cause. This figure was also over 41 per cent of all drownings for the year.

Water mishaps are not as predictable as highway accidents, however it is probable that more than 10 deaths and possibly as high as 30 will result from swimming, boating accidents, fishing and other water activities during May of this year in Georgia.

During May of 1965, 23 persons drowned in Georgia. The highest month for drownings in 1964 was June, when 29 met their deaths in water. In May and July of 1964, there were 11



photo by Dan Keever

This fisherman is taking no chances with safety. He's wearing a ski belt and carrying a life preserver. Ranger George Jones is checking to see that the minimum of safety equipment is carried in the boat.

drownings each month. July and August of 1965 produced 13 drownings each. There was a sizable decrease in drownings in 1965 from 1964, when 90 persons drowned.

Last year, more drownings occurred in farm ponds than on other types of water, but lakes and streams produced high numbers as well. Most boating accidents occur on lakes.

Capsizing, collision and reckless operation were the major reasons for boating accidents.

Rangers will be stringently enforcing new regulations passed last year prohibiting persons riding on the bow of decked boats where there is no bow rail, and requiring either a rear-view or an observer aboard while water skiing.

The Commission has acquired more boats this year to step up water safety patrol in reservoirs and streams and is adding additional wildlife rangers to be used in summer lake patrolling.

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